[Translation]

Density of Forests

790. SHRI ASHOK ARGAL :
SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) the ratio of density of forests in the country in comparison to international ratio;

(b) the position of Madhya Pradesh in this regard;

(c) whether the ratio of forest density in Madhya Pradesh has decreased due to which the lives of tribals have been affected; and

(d) the steps being taken by the Government for the conservation of forests, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI) : (a) No international ratio has been prescribed about density of forest. However, if per capita availability of forests is to be taken as an indicator then the ratio works out to 0.07 hectares (1991 Census) in India as compared to 0.89 hectares in the world. As per the State of Forest Report, 1997, country has 19.27% of the geographical area under forest cover against a minimum of one-third of the total land area under forest or tree cover stipulated in the National Forest Policy, 1988.

(b) The per capita forests in Madhya Pradesh is about 0.20 hectares and 29.6% of the geographical area is under forest cover.

(c) If the per capita forests forms the basis of forest density, there is a marginal decrease from 0.206 to 0.200 hectares in Madhya Pradesh (1991 Census) between 1995 and 1997 assessments. If this is to be viewed it terms of dense forests then in Madhya Pradesh, the dense forest has decreased by 12,408 sq. km. as compared to 1995 assessment.

There has been a decrease of 1% of forest area compared to the geographical area of tribal districts in Madhya Pradesh as per 1997 assessment which may have marginal affect on the lives of tribals living in near vicinity.

(d) Major steps being taken by the Central and State Governments for conservation of forests are :

(i) Afforestation programmes are undertaken by State Governments from their own resources as well as with financial assistance from Government of India.

(ii) Externally Aided Projects are being implemented for preservation of forests and forest wealth;

(iii) Guidelines have been issued to all the State Governments to involve village communities in protection and regeneration of degraded forests through Joint Forest Management;

(iv) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been enacted to regulate the diversion of forest lands;

(v) A network of 447 wildlife sanctuaries and 84 National Parks covering about 1,50,000 sq. km has been set up for conservation of wild flora and fauna. Financial assistance is provided by the Central Government for development of national parks and sanctuaries.

(vi) Hunting of wild animals in Schedules I to IV of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, has been banned. Special measures for protection and conservation of tiger, elephants and rhinos and their habitat are also being implemented.

(vii) A project titled "India Eco Development Project" funded by IDA/GEF is under implementation and it aims for bio-diversity conservation through eco development in Seven National Parks/Tiger Reserves.

[English]

Clearance to Power Project in Kerala

791. SHRI MULLAPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have recently cleared any power project at Cannanore in Kerala;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any foreign company has equity participation in the said project;

(d) whether the Government of Kerala has raised objections to the project; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM) : (a) No power project at Cannanore in Kerala in the private sector has been techno-economically cleared recently by the Central Electricity Authority (CEA).

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The developers of one project viz., Kannur CCGT (513 MW) have proposed foreign equity participation by M/s. Enron International in the project.

(d) and (e) The State Government of Kerala has informed that they do not have any objection to the setting up of the Kannur CCGT Project. However, the State Government does not agree to the financial structure proposed with M/s. Enron as a partner.